

2009 Draft Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

The staff of the City of Westminster Planning, Zoning and Development Department has worked hard to make the 2009 Comprehensive Plan a document that will become an everyday tool for the City of Westminster administration. The planning staff set a goal of ensuring that the public, local officials and City staff are able to refer to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan to not only better understand the community vision for the future but to also understand how planning can facilitate creating that vision. Incorporated throughout the plan are principles and concepts, adopted by various national organizations which will be used to educate the public, local officials and City staff on how to implement the goals, objectives and actions of the plan.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan embraces the principles of Smart Growth, and the State of Maryland's 12 new State planning visions, to serve as guidelines for future growth and development while protecting the City's limited resources and land. The two new elements, Water Resources Element and the Municipal Growth Element, set the pace for future development in Westminster. This plan also works to give recognition to Westminster's community partners in State, County and local organizations and agencies. As a small city, Westminster depends on these partnerships to build a sustainable and vibrant community.

A new addition to the Comprehensive Plan is the Public Participation and Neighborhood Planning Element. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan update started with the coordination of the first Westminster resident survey in the summer of 2008. The survey was a success and triggered new initiatives within the City to improve residents' access to information and enhance communication between local officials and residents. The survey was followed by a series of community workshops in the fall of 2008 that offered residents the opportunity to voice their ideas and concerns about the future of their community. In the winter of 2009, the planning staff combined the results of the survey and the feedback from the workshops, to create the 2008 Community Vision Report. This report served as the base of the comprehensive plan update process. Each element in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan begins with a description from the 2008 Community Vision Report that relates to the element and an outline on how the element promotes a principle of Smart Growth and/or a State planning vision.

After the 2009 Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the City will use the Public Participation and Neighborhood Planning Element as a guide to create neighborhood-specific plans. The citywide vision and policies describe an overall preferred growth strategy for Westminster, while neighborhood planning establishes a specific vision and strategy for each neighborhood area.

Pursuant to Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the City of Westminster Planning and Zoning Commission will be holding a public hearing following the 60-day review period on the Draft 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

The tentative date for the Planning Commission Public Hearing is September 22, 2009.